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State Honors Women Torchbearers

The Indiana Roof Ballroom in Indianapolis was aglow Thursday evening when the state-sponsored Indiana Commission for Women held its second annual Salute to Women. In an Oscar®-style gala the Commission presented this year's Torchbearer Awards to women who have overcome obstacles and made Indiana a better place in which to live, work and raise a family. The Torchbearer Award is the highest award presented only to women by the State of Indiana.

The statewide Council of Judges chose to present several special awards this year. They are: Trailblazer Award, Virginia Dill McCarty, Indianapolis; Keeper of the Light Award, Eva Kor, Terre Haute; Vision for Tomorrow Award, Carol D'Amico, Indianapolis; Community Spirit Award, Angela Barron McBride, Indianapolis; Heart of Indiana Award, Patricia G. Barnes, Indianapolis; Woman of Promise Award, Kelly D. Frank, Spencer and the Commissioners' Lifetime Achievement Award to Margaret Curtis (age 95), Muncie.

Ms. Curtis is credited with founding Planned Parenthood of Delaware County in the late 1950s. She served as its first president of an all-volunteer organization that had its first clinic in the belfry of the Friends Church, a treasury of \$300.00, and an inventory of six speculums. In the ensuing years she served as volunteer, educator, fund-raiser and advocate for a woman's right to access of family planning information.

Another winner of a special award, Eva Kor, overcame being imprisoned in Auschwitz during the Second World War, as well as enduring scientific experiments conducted on twins by the Nazis. She has since created a museum to honor Holocaust victims in her hometown of Terre Haute.

In addition to the presentation of the awards guests were feted with dinner and a program that included vibrant entertainment sung by Broadway singer Cicily Daniels, and soliloquies on being a woman performed by veteran Indianapolis actresses Mary Atkins and Priscilla Lindsay. In "Seasons of Love" from the musical Rent, Ms Daniels was accompanied by students from Broad Ripple High School.

Melissa C. Martin, Indianapolis, president of Issues & Advocates public policy marketing and advertising serves as Chair of the Indiana Commission for Women, and also was chairman of the event.

In keeping with Governor Daniels tightened financial belt on state government, Ms Martin said, “We are honored to have many sponsors who made this event possible, including Wellpoint/Anthem, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Indiana State University and the Indiana Women’s History Association. With their support and that of our many table sponsors we were able to honor these outstanding women without spending taxpayer dollars.”

Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman presided as Honorary Chairman of Indiana’s Salute to Women and gave certificates to each of the finalists. She encouraged the audience to continue to look for ways in which each person can make a difference in their own community.

Each of the Torchbearer Award winners listed below received a gold medallion inscribed with “Lady Victory” and the official seal of the State of Indiana.

Category	Award Winner	Hometown
Advocacy	Diane Kavidias Schneider	
Education	JoAnne Gora	Muncie
Engineering & Architecture	Mary Lou Schnell	Logottee
Entrepreneurship & Management	Anne K. Shane	Indianapolis
Finance	Connie Nass	Huntingburg
Health & Medicine	(2 winners)	
	Catherine Winslow	Carmel
	Julie Novak	Lafayette
International Community	Mary Jane Gonzolez	Indianapolis
Journalism	Carolene Mays	Indianapolis
Labor Advocate	Alta Chrapliwy	South Bend
Law	Sheila Jenkins	Indianapolis

Public-Private Partnership	Patricia Kieffner	Indianapolis
Public Relations & Marketing	Diane McCabe	Zionsville
Public Safety	Heather Bolejack	Indianapolis
Sports & Fitness	Mitzi Witchger	Noblesville
Social Services	Alecia DeCoudreaux	Indianapolis
Volunteerism	Claudette Einhorn	Indianapolis
Women in Government	Senator Teresa Lubbers	Indianapolis
Women's Studies	Bonnie Bazata	Notre Dame
	2005 Special Awards	
Heart of Indiana	Pat Barnes	Indianapolis
Trailblazer	Virginia Dill McCarty	Indianapolis
Community Spirit	Angela Barron McBride	Indianapolis
Keeper of the Light	Eva Kor	Terre Haute
Vision for Tomorrow	Carol D'Amico	Indianapolis
Woman of Promise (Under 30)	Kelly Frank	Spencer
Lifetime Achievement Award	Margaret Curtis	Muncie